

SITUATION REPORT NO. 4
INCIDENT NO. 2004-021
DATE: March 31, 2004 Time: 5:00 p.m.

TO: Governor John Hoeven
State Capitol
Bismarck ND 58505

1. NATURE OF DISASTER: **Spring Flooding** induced by heavy rains on frozen ground and ice-packed drains, streams and rivers.
2. DEATHS AND INJURIES: No deaths or injuries have been reported.
3. DAMAGES: In order to see firsthand the effects of flooding in northeastern North Dakota, Governor John Hoeven, his Communications Director, the N.D. Division of Emergency Management Director, the N.D. Department of Human Services Director and the N.D. State Water Commission (SWC) Assistant Engineer participated in an extensive aerial and ground tour on March 29-30. They also talked with local officials and residents. As noted by the SWC Assistant Engineer, the counties were experiencing winter-like conditions with frozen ground, frost cover and snow pack when a flash flood watch was issued for the weekend of March 27-28. The area received an unprecedented amount of rainfall, catching officials and residents off guard. In March, the average amount of precipitation is less than one inch. The rain received on March 27-28 ranged between two to five inches, two to five times above normal monthly precipitation levels. The rain, combined with the winter-like conditions, created a disproportionately high runoff, which caused instant flooding. The flood on several tributaries, including the Forest, Park, Goose and Upper Sheyenne Rivers, is comparable to the 1997 flood because of the rainfall on frozen ground and snow pack. While none of North Dakota's major metropolitan areas have been seriously affected to this point, the individual hardships in the rural areas and in rural communities have impacted a significant percent of households. Officials are concerned that flooded roads will prevent access for emergency medical services and other first responders.

State officials also toured the snow-covered Devils Lake Basin, where record level flooding may result from recent rainfall. The extent of the rainfall's impact into the basin, which is already full, will not be known until April or May.

Overland runoff throughout the northeastern part of North Dakota continues to find its way to tributaries and rivers. Even as ponding flood waters have begun to recede, levels in tributaries and rivers in the Red River Basin continue to rise.

A River Flood Warning remains in effect for the Red River at Oslo, Minnesota; the Goose River at Hillsboro; the Park River at Grafton; and the Pembina River at Neche. Additionally, a River Flood Warning has been issued for the Red River at Drayton.

The following is a National Weather Service (NWS) summary of river levels and projected crests:

Goose River: The river has crested at Hillsboro with current readings showing 14.4 feet. Flood stage is 7.0 feet and levels are forecast to decline over the next week.

Forest River: The river stage at Minto indicates a continued decline with the current river stage showing 7.2 feet, still 1.2 feet over flood stage.

Park River: The current river stage at Grafton reads 14.9 feet, still 2.9 feet over flood stage with continued declining levels forecasted over the next week.

Pembina River: Forecasts call for the river to crest at Neche at a level of 21.0 feet. The current level is 20.3 feet with the flood stage measured at 18.0 feet. River levels are forecasted to begin a slow decline on Saturday, April 3.

Red River: The current river stage at Oslo, MN, is 35.6 feet with the forecast reflecting declining levels over the next seven days. Flood stage is 28.0 feet. At Drayton, river levels measured 34.0 feet with a crest of 38.4 feet forecasted for Monday, April 5. Flood stage is 32.0 feet. At Pembina, the current river stage is 38.5 feet with crests forecasted at 47.0 feet on Wednesday, April 7. Flood stage is 42.0 feet. East Grand Forks is reporting the river currently cresting at 38.5 feet. Flood stage is 28.0 feet.

Minor flooding will continue along the Sheyenne River at Valley City, Lisbon, Kindred, West Fargo Diversion and Harwood.

Cavalier County

The N.D. Department of Health (DoH) issued a boil order for the city of Langdon in Cavalier County. The city is in the middle of a construction project and is having difficulty converting from the former treatment process to a new process. Health officials indicated the situation with turbidity is an operational problem that may be complicated by spring runoff.

Nelson County

The County Emergency Manager reported that the roads reported closed on March 29, still remain closed, but the County Road Superintendent stated that the water has receded. In the Township of Wamduska, a road in section 23 is washing out and is blocked off. County Road 2, in Clara Township, at sections 4 and 9, is closed due to water over the roads. Several roads in

Dahlen Township have gravel washes. The public works director for the City of Michigan reported that the lift station has slowed down, and the water in the trailer court, streets, football field, park and golf course has receded. Water is receding from the city and from the reservoir north to Lake Laretta through the culverts. A few homes in the City of Tolna have reported water in the basements. In the City of Lakota, a day care center has reported seepage in the basement.

Pembina County

On the evening of March 30, sandbagging occurred on the south end of the City of Neche due to overland flooding. The operation was completed within three hours.

Ransom County

On March 31, the County Emergency Manager reported a log jam on the Fort Ransom Dam. The log jam had dislodged itself by the time county highway crews arrived on scene.

Traill County

North Dakota Highway 200 is closed due to water on the roadway. In Hillsboro, volunteers, Hillsboro fire fighters and city personnel worked throughout the night, operating pumps and reinforcing the dike at the Hillsboro pool to prevent water from penetrating the dike. The Goose River continues to recede in the Mayville-Portland area.

Walsh County

In Walsh County, water levels are slowly dropping. Substantial overland flooding, from a westerly direction, is occurring. County officials are encouraging residents to keep ring dikes in place until the water recedes to the riverbanks. The City of Langdon's water problem is impacting three cities in the northwestern portion of Walsh County -- Edinburg, Adams and Fairdale. The county nurse is picking up water from a local supermarket/convenience store and delivering it to the schools in those communities so potable water is available.

4. RESOURCES:

LOCAL: No changes from previous reports.

STATE: No changes from previous reports.

FEDERAL: No changes from previous reports.

5. VOLUNTEER ACTION: In Walsh County, the United Methodist Services is obtaining pumps that can be used for pumping out basements and other areas, as needed.

The Salvation Army provided 100 clean up kits to Walsh County on Tuesday, March 30.

6. MAJOR ACTIONS: The N.D. Department of Health, Water Quality Division, granted permission to the city of Grafton to pump water out of their lift stations directly into the Park River. The city's lift stations were having trouble keeping up with inflows and local sewers are backing up. A damage assessment by

local officials in Walsh County near the City of Hoople is taking place. Walsh County Social Services will be providing a telephone number for people to report home damages. Walsh County Emergency Management has asked for volunteers to aid in cleanup of flooded homes.

On March 30, the Walsh County Highway Department bladed the only road into the City of Forest River and crews attempted to place gravel in holes, but the gravel disappeared as the road was still too soft. The County Highway Department will attempt to dry the road today by blading and placing gravel on the road. Crews are also blading trails that lead into the City of Forest River to allow access.

On March 30, the Steele County Commission issued an emergency declaration.

In Pembina County, individual assistance calls are being taken by Pembina County Social Services.

7. ASSISTANCE NEEDED: No changes from previous reports.
8. OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE: No changes from previous reports.
9. OTHER INFORMATION: The N.D. Division of Emergency Management's Situation Reports are posted on the Division's Internet home page. The address is <http://www.state.nd.us/dem>.

Douglas C. Friez, State Director